

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of April 25, 2005 is respectfully requested.

It is initially noted that a number of minor editorial changes have been made to the specification and abstract so as to generally improve the overall form of this application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2 and 5-16 as being anticipated by JP 2003-033612 to Nakajima et al. (Nakajima). Further, the Examiner rejected claims 3 and 4 as being unpatentable over Nakajima in view of Matsushita Denki Sagyo, JP 2000-15036A (Matsushita). However, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention, as particularly as now set forth in amended claims 2-8 and 10-11, and new claims 17-24, clearly patentably distinguishes over both Nakajima and Matsushita.

Initially, it is noted that by the above amendments, claim 2 has been redrafted into independent form so as to include all of the limitations of independent claim 1. Further, claim 3 has been similarly rewritten to include all of the prior claims 1 and 2. Claims 1 and 9 have been canceled.

Claims 17-24 are method claims reciting a method for controlling an air-conditioning unit. These claims should be examined along with the apparatus claims, because they are in fact quite closely related to the apparatus claims.

With respect to the apparatus claims, in addition to the amendments so as to redraft claims 2 and 3 into independent form, a number of minor changes have been made for the sake of the form of the claims. However, the essential limitations of prior claims 2 and 3 remain the same. Dependent claims 4-6 and 10 and 11 have also had minor formal changes thereto.

Thus, the present invention is directed to an air-conditioning unit 10 that has an inlet 11 for drawing in air and a heat exchanger 13, 14 and 15 for exchanging heat between the air that is drawn in from the inlet and a refrigerant. A diffuser 16 discharges the air that has been heat-exchanged using the heat exchanger from the unit. An air flow device 17 is used to blow the air from the diffuser.

An enzyme carrier is arranged in an internal space of the unit through which the air flows. The enzyme carrier supports an allergen deactivating enzyme.

Further, the present invention includes an enzyme activation device that is operable to create an atmosphere in the internal space that activates the allergen deactivating enzyme. As described on page 29 of the specification, the enzyme activation device may include the constituents with which the air-conditioning apparatus is normally provided to execute an allergen activation operating mode that is controlled by a control device of the air-conditioning apparatus.

Contrary to the Examiner's position, Nakajima does not include an enzyme activation device that is operable to create an atmosphere for activating the allergen deactivating enzyme. While Nakajima may disclose a number of similar structural features with the present invention, there is no device as claimed that is operable to create an atmosphere in the internal space that activates the allergen deactivation enzyme supported by the enzyme carrier.

Furthermore, Nakajima also fails to disclose or suggest an internal air retaining device that is operable to retain air flow within the internal space. Noting for example page 5, line 18, to page 6, line 2 of the specification, by retaining air flow within the internal space with the internal air retaining device, the creation of the atmosphere for activating the allergen deactivation enzyme is promoted.

Further, the combination of the enzyme activation device and the internal air retaining device, which promotes the creation of the atmosphere for activating the allergen deactivation enzyme, is not disclosed or suggested by the cited reference. Nor is there any disclosure or suggestion of the beneficial effects that are achieved by this combination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 2, along with the claims depending therefrom, clearly distinguish over Nakajima.

In rejecting claim 3, the Examiner acknowledged that Nakajima does not disclose an open/close device, and thus cited Matsushita as teaching the use of an open/close device with an inlet 16 and outlet 17 in an allergen decomposition device for the purpose of controlling air flow. However, there does not appear to be any such open/close device according to the present invention and as reflected in independent claim 3 disclosed or suggested by Matsushita. Claim 3 requires that the internal air retaining device is an open/close device that closes a part or all of openings that communicate with the internal

space so as to keep the internal space in a semi-enclosed or fully enclosed condition. While the Examiner has identified an inlet and an outlet in Matsushita, there is no open/close device.

In the present invention, the open/close device can close a part or all of the openings that communicate with the internal space. Note page 52, lines 6-9. Using such an open/close device, an unexpected effect is obtained in that there is a creation of an atmosphere for activating the allergen deactivation enzyme is facilitated. See page 6, lines 7-9 of the specification. The openings of the inlet 16 and outlet 17 of Matsushita are not adjustable, however. They could not be partly or fully closed.

Furthermore, claim 3 includes all of the limitations of claim 2, and thus further distinguishes over Matsushita, Matsushita failing to cure the defects of Nakajima.

New independent method claim 17 emphasizes the distinctions according to the present invention. The method claim is drawn to a method for controlling an air-conditioning unit, including operational steps of drawing air in, exchanging heat, and discharging air. It further recites the step of activating an allergen deactivation enzyme that is supported by an enzyme carrier in an internal space of the air-conditioning unit by creating an atmosphere in the internal space that is operable to activate the enzyme. As has been discussed above, the prior art fails to disclose this operation, or structure operable to carry out this operation.

Accordingly, claim 17, along with all of its dependent claims, also clearly distinguishes over the prior art cited by the Examiner. For this reason, not only is examination of claim 17 and its dependent claims appropriate at this point, but it may be seen that all of the claims now pending in the present application clearly distinguish over the prior art cited by the Examiner. Indication of such is respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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